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ABSTRACT

Self-evaluation is becoming an essential component of both formative and summative teacher evaluation systems. This paper defines self-evaluation as the process of judging one's own performance for purposes of self-improvement. Teachers use both formal and informal methods to assess their students' classroom performance; however, when they attend to their own performance, the assessment process tends to become informal. The bulk of this report provides a discussion of some techniques used in formal approaches to self-evaluation including tools used to collect data in self-initiated efforts allowing teachers to gain insight into their own classroom behaviors and beliefs. Three advances in educational research methods that have influenced the history of self-evaluation are highlighted: (1) rating scales and self-reports; (2) video or audio tape recordings of a live teaching episode; and (3) systematic teacher reflection. Portfolios, a purposeful collection of materials by and about a teacher that both the teacher and others can use to evaluate performance, are also described. A summary asserts that the validity and reliability of teachers' self-evaluation depends on their capacity for accurately and consistently judging their own performance. (Contains 23 references.) (LL)

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A Primer on Teacher Self-Evaluation

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Self-evaluation is becoming an essential component of personnel evaluation in the twenty-first century. Relying on the evaluatee as an initiator and primary interpreter of data, this approach can be a component of both formative and summative teacher evaluation. Some evaluators view self-evaluation as an alternative to authoritative, hierarchical, management-oriented models of accountability (Tetenbaum and Mulkeen, 1988). This paper provides: (1) a definition of self-evaluation; (2) selected highlights in the development of self-evaluation as a component of teacher evaluation; and (3) a brief discussion of some techniques used in self-evaluation.

Self- Evaluation or Self-Assessment?

Self-evaluation and self-assessment are terms that have been used interchangeably to describe an approach or model for self-improvement. Whether used for professional development or in the evaluation of teachers, the approach does not employ one particular method for gathering data or one particular data source. Rather, it is a comprehensive approach characterized by: (1) a belief that teachers' performances can be improved through self-evaluation procedures; (2) the initiation of evaluative activities by the evaluatees; and (3) the use of a variety of data collection techniques and several data sources to provide the evaluatees with information on their own performance. Barber (1990) describes a multi-stage process involving data collection, behavior changes, and reevaluation which presumably leads to performance improvement.

Although the terms self-assessment and self-evaluation have been used interchangeably in the teacher evaluation literature, we prefer to distinguish between them. Wheeler and Haertel (1993) define self-evaluation as "the process of judging one's own performance for the purpose of self-improvement" (p. 131). Self-assessment, in contrast, is the process of collecting data and information on one's own teaching performance using one or more assessment methods and data sources. Self-evaluation may be mandated as part of either a formative or summative evaluation system. Teachers may use the results of self-evaluations as one component of their ongoing formative evaluation, or as part of an annual summative evaluation. Whatever the purpose is, self-evaluation is used to verify that a teacher is making progress toward self-defined goals.

Selected Highlights in the Development of Teacher Self-Evaluation

Over the centuries teachers have used formal and informal methods to assess their students' classroom performance. Among the formal methods that teachers have used to

judge the amount and quality of student learning are end-of-unit tests, essays, book reports, science lab notebooks, student reading logs, student journals, and homework assignments. These formal methods of assessment are primarily used by teachers to assign student grades. When teachers turn their attention to their own performance, the assessment process tends to become informal. Teachers must gather information as instruction is actually occurring. They gather information that permits them to quickly gauge the pace, difficulty, clarity, cultural appropriateness, engagement, and intellectual suitability of the content, materials, and activities they are presenting, and the appropriateness of the decisions they are making in response to student behavior. Based on the information that teachers gather, they can alter a single activity or the instructional plan for the entire year. Teachers gather such information by posing questions of varying levels of cognitive difficulty to students, listening to student answers and comments, and observing student demeanor, interest, and enthusiasm during the lesson. This type of information gathering is informal and its primary purpose is to help teachers navigate their students through the material being covered.

Formal assessments can add to the data on teacher performance. Over the past half century, research on teacher characteristics, effectiveness, and cognitions has contributed a variety of data collection methods for formally gathering information on teacher performance, including: rating scales, checklists, self-reports, interaction and discourse analysis, and observations. Some of these methods have become tools that allow principals, supervisors, and evaluators to systematically and objectively provide feedback to teachers. Some of these same tools now are used to collect data in self-initiated efforts whereby teachers gain insight into their own classroom behavior and beliefs.

Techniques Used in Self-Evaluation

Below we discuss three advances in educational research methods that have influenced the history of teacher self-evaluation. Each of these advances (the use of rating scales; the use of audio and videotapes to facilitate self-confrontation; and the use of teacher reflection as a self-assessment technique) are linked to a particular genre of research. Rating scales have been a staple of social science research since the late nineteenth century and have seen educational applications since the 1950s. Electronic recordings were promoted by the advent of microteaching in the mid and late 1960s. Teacher reflection is a product, in part, of the more recent breakthroughs in cognitive psychological research and constructivist theory.

Rating Scales and Self-Reports

According to Good and Mulryan (1990), the origins of self-evaluation are in rating scales. Beginning in the mid 1950s, the rating scale was used for teacher accountability, including monitoring and evaluation. Many different types of rating scales were devised. Some were products of careful research on teacher effectiveness, while others were lists of teacher traits and behaviors deemed essential by school superintendents. More recently developed rating scales and self-report forms tend to focus on particular teacher behaviors and beliefs.

Three-to-five point Likert scales have been popular as a method of evaluating whether a teacher possessed a given trait or exhibited desired performances. Another option is checklists, which are basically two-point rating scales (e.g., Yes/No, Do/Don't Do, Agree/Disagree).

An example of a recently developed scale designed to increase a teacher's self-awareness is the *Teaching Goals Inventory* (*TGI*) (Angelo and Cross, 1993). The *TGI* provides an illustration of how a rating scale can be developed and implemented to provide feedback of value to teachers. The *TGI* helps college instructors articulate their teaching goal priorities. The self-scorable version presents 52 teaching goals, organized into six clusters. Below, the six clusters of skills and values, and the six illustrative teaching goals are shown. College teachers are asked to: "Assess each goal's importance to what you deliberately aim to have your students accomplish, rather than the goal's general worthiness or overall importance to your institution's mission" (Angelo and Cross, 1993, p. 393). They rate each goal's importance on a scale from 1 to 5 (1=Not applicable--a goal you never try to achieve; 5=Essential--a goal you always/nearly always try to achieve).

Six Goals Presented in the *TGI* and the Cluster of Skills and Values Represented

Cluster	Goal
Higher-Order Thinking Skills	Develop analytical skills
Basic Academic Success Skills	Improve mathematical skills
Discipline-Specific Knowledge & Skills	Learn concepts and theories in this subject
Liberal Arts and Academic Values	Develop an informed historical perspective
Work and Career Preparation	Develop leadership skills
Personal Development	Cultivate physical health and well-being

Teachers can compute their average cluster score by summing the ratings given to goals in each cluster and dividing by the number of goals in that cluster. Teachers can then compare the average scores among the clusters and become more aware of their own priorities. For example, some teachers may believe that the courses they are teaching develop students' higher-order thinking skills. However, when those teachers complete the *TGI*, they rate highly only a few of the goals in the Higher-Order Thinking Skills cluster. When the teachers compute the six cluster scores, it becomes clear that their priorities are not in developing higher-order thinking skills. The results should prompt these teachers to think about what they are trying to accomplish in their courses. The *TGI* illustrates the role of self-assessment in increasing teachers' awareness.

The Teacher Evaluation Rating Scales (TeachERS), published by PRO-ED, Inc., include a supervisor's form and a teacher's self-assessment form (Wheeler, 1992). TeachERS covers six areas of teaching, each with two to five components. These areas are: Instructional Planning, Instructional Management, Teaching Procedures, Monitoring Procedures, Personal Qualities, and Professionalism. The teacher's self ratings on each of the 20 components are subtracted from the supervisor's ratings on those components to obtain a discrepancy figure. This figure aids in the development of a self-improvement plan by the teacher.

Self-report forms are similar to rating forms in that they specify areas of teaching performance to be judged; however, they usually consist of a series of open-ended questions to which the teachers respond with regard to their own behavior. Such forms can provide more information on how teachers perceive their own teaching performance, rationales for their performance, and perceived strengths and weaknesses.

Teachers, in conducting self-evaluations, may not only use self-ratings for the purpose of improving their own performance, but may also collect rating scale data from clients and stakeholders, as well. Teachers may request that students, parents, supervisors, and colleagues rate some aspect of their teaching performance. Teachers can summarize data from these ratings and compared them with the self-rating results as part of a self-evaluation, thus encouraging further self-examination.

Electronic Recordings

Barber (1990) asserts that one of the most popular techniques for self-evaluations and assessments is the recording of a live teaching episode on either video or audio tapes. Electronic recordings allow teachers to see themselves as others see them. Optimally, the videotaping would employ a split-screen so teachers can see both their own actions and the reactions of students in their classrooms.

Microteaching, in which teachers instruct for only 15-20 minutes with a small group of students, incorporates video technology as the primary method for providing feedback. A paper-and-pencil rating form, checklist, or observation form is usually completed by the evaluatee while watching the teaching episode on tape. Many systems that use video tapes or audio tapes recommend that the evaluatee watch or listen to the tapes with a supervisor, colleague, or evaluator.

The educational literature promoting video tapes is based on a model of self-confrontation developed by Fuller and Manning (1973). Many techniques of self-evaluation are predicated on the discrepancy between an individual teacher's view of reality and the information recorded on the tape, an observation scale, or other data collection devices. Bailey (1981) asserts that misperceptions of one's own actual teaching performance are commonplace. For effective self-assessment or self-evaluation, existing teacher behaviors must be identified, strengths and weaknesses detected, and new behaviors practiced. The use of media, according to Bailey, reduces the subjectivity that surrounds assessing one's own teaching performance.

Research on videotaping's efficacy in modifying teaching behavior is skimpy. Borg, Kallenbach, Morris, and Friebel (1968) cite earlier research which reported that teacher skills learned through microteaching transfer to regular classroom teaching and endure for several months. They also mentioned studies showing that videotaping in a microteaching format can alter teacher behavior with more alacrity than student teaching or internships (Allen and Fortune, 1966; Borg, Kallenbach, Kelley, and Langer, 1968; Borg, Kelley, Langer, Kallenbach, and Gall, 1968; Kallenbach and Gall, 1968). These studies indicate that videotaping of teachers can certainly enhance teacher performance.

When teachers initiate the taping, as in self-evaluation, we can only assume that they will have even more motivation to improve.

Other uses of electronic recordings to study teaching and to evaluate teachers are described in the literature (Carroll, 1980). Examples are Kagan's Interpersonal Process Recall (Kagan, 1975) and Flanders' Interaction Analysis (Flanders, 1970).

Teacher Reflection

A new perspective on teacher self-assessment is being spawned from research on teacher cognitions. Based, in part, on the scholarship of Donald A. Schön (1983), teachers are being encouraged to reflect upon their own teaching practice as a means of increasing their expertise. In this context, teachers spontaneously generate self-assessment during reflection. A hypothetical self-assessment generated during reflection might be: "My math lessons do not keep the attention of the advanced students. I need to develop more challenging materials and presentations." This statement indicates that the teacher holds an internal standard for motivating students in his/her class. The teacher is comparing his/her own performance to that standard. This is not yet self-evaluation, because the teacher is not using the reflection process to change behaviors and to monitor or verify improvement in teaching performance. The hypothetical statement is simply a self-assessment, initiated by the teacher, of a problematic classroom phenomena.

Self-evaluation through reflection occurs when a teacher takes time to examine and analyze a series of teaching events or a collection of materials. Journals, logs, portfolios, collections of student work, student and school records, and video and audio tapes are useful means for collecting the information to be analyzed and for encouraging teachers to reflect on their own performance. Portfolios have received increasing attention in recent years for assessing teacher performance (Wheeler, 1993). Portfolios are a purposeful collection of materials by and about a teacher that both the teacher and others can use to evaluate performance. Based on his experience training perspective teachers and working with new teachers, Nagel (1993) says: "The portfolio piece almost forces reflection."

Gullickson and Airasian (1993, p. 1) state:

> If experience is to heighten a teacher's expertise and understanding, it must be reflected on, analyzed, and used to alter or improve practice. It is the constant cycle of experience, reflection, and improvement that marks a teacher's growth and development; teachers do learn by doing, but only if they also reflect upon, critique, and base future actions on knowledge gained from past actions.

Gullickson and Airasian point out that earlier research on teacher thinking attended to teachers' cognitions while planning instruction, interactions with students during the lesson, and teachers' theories and beliefs. Little attention has been paid to the role of intuition, recall, and practical knowledge in generating teacher self-assessments.

From this perspective, self-assessment is construed as a product of dissonant events. The dissonance may occur when teachers informally compare their own performance with that of their colleagues, or when classroom events take a surprising turn and teachers find themselves in unexpected circumstances. Dissonant events can also be a product of externally imposed standards or evaluation procedures in which a discrepancy exists between teachers' beliefs about themselves and the reality captured in the evaluative activity. Self-assessments or self-evaluations may be different when they are the product of an actual teaching event versus those produced by externally imposed evaluation procedures.

Airasian (1993) conducted a content analysis of seven sources that describe life in classrooms as reported through teacher reflection. He finds some, but not much, evidence of teacher self-assessments in these settings. (The relative paucity of self-assessments may be because the purpose of the teacher reflection was other than teacher self-assessment.) Airasian questions the consequences of self-assessments generated by teachers in response to their classroom activities. Although many of the self-assessments led to a decision or judgment, few of the sources indicated the course of action that would be followed. Nor did the content analysis clarify the conditions under which teachers produce self-assessments (i.e., the amount of dissonance needed to produce a self-assessment, the amount of time needed for reflection before a decision is reached, the evidence a teacher considers when reflecting, or the process by which a particular event or belief is selected for purposes of self-assessment).

What is the value of self-assessments produced during teacher reflection? A number of sources analyzed by Airasian indicated that teachers reported that they gained little insight or advice from administrators or inservice training as a means of improving their instruction. Thus, Airasian (1993) suggests an increasing role for self-assessment as a prod to teacher improvement "in the light of the low influence administrators and inservice programs were reported to have on teacher growth" (p. 15). Self-assessment could be a primary vehicle by which solutions to teaching problems and teacher improvement occur. Their value depends in part on the capacity of the teachers to examine their own performance, using criteria that are valid.

Teacher self-assessments generated during reflection are more subjective than self-assessments or self-evaluations supported by videotapes, observations, or ratings collected from clients and stakeholders. When personnel decisions, such as termination or promotion, are being made, the evidence presented to the courts must be legally defensible. Thus, self-evaluations generated during reflection will likely have less weight in summative personnel evaluations, but may be more useful for professional development and formative evaluations than the more traditional approaches to self-evaluation.

Summary

Many assessment methods or techniques can contribute teacher self-evaluation data. In practice, few teacher self-evaluations make use of only a single method. Better are the hybrid methods that combine self-evaluation with peer review strategies and that employ

several assessment methods to gather data. Below is a modified list of methods compiled by Barber (1990).

- audiotape and videotape
- observation by an objective outsider
- interviews
- modeling, followed by videotaping and self-viewing
- questionnaires
- rating forms
- self-reports
- self-study materials
- teacher reflection

The Angelo and Cross (1993) handbook describes 50 classroom assessment techniques, many of which could serve as teacher self-assessment methods.

Some teachers prefer to develop their own criteria and set their own standards for evaluating their performance. However, there are many available sets of criteria and standards that teachers can use. Examples are those available from the local school district's teacher evaluation system, the state's teacher licensure agency, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (1991), and professional associations (e.g., the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1991). In addition, findings from research on effective teachers and effective schools can also be useful, both for professional development and self-evaluation.

The validity and reliability of teachers' self-evaluations depends on their capacity to accurately and consistently judge their own performance. Carroll (1981, p. 180) points out:

> One's objectivity can rightfully be questioned when one's own teaching career hangs in the balance. Although self-evaluation can contribute useful data for administrative decisions by providing additional information and perspectives that may be unavailable from other sources, its greatest value continues to be for self-understanding and instructional improvement.

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